



Alpha Blues Surprise NVA Force

A surprised North Vietnamese soldier picked up his .30 caliber machinegun and charged down a trail toward the Alpha Troop Blues of the 1st Sq, 9th Cav, March 19 to touch off a series of contacts that left 39 enemy soldiers dead in the Dog's Head area of War Zone C.

The aerial rifle platoon had been inserted to conduct ground reconnaissance into the region, a bulge in the surrounding border being shaped somewhat like the head of a dog. The Cavalrymen had just followed a trail toward the border and were on their way back when contact was made.

The platoon passed through a small NVA training area, complete with bamboo models of American tanks, and headed up a trail. "We had contact immediately. We came across three or four NVA, one with a .30 caliber machinegun. He charged us, firing, and our '60 gunner let 'em have it. The enemy pulled back and we moved on," said 1st Lt. Jack Hugel, the platoon leader.

Sniper fire began snapping through the bamboo. After checking out some bunkers, the Blues kept moving, picking off snipers as they went. Elements of Delta Company, 2nd Bn, 8th Cav were inserted and linked up with the Blues, but only after several snipers were cleared out of trees in the surrounding

jungle. The two units formed a perimeter to formulate plans, all the while taking sniper fire. They moved out toward a pick-up zone and saw an enemy squad trying to set up an ambush with a .30 caliber machinegun. The ambush was broken up and five enemy killed. Throughout the contact Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA), Cobras and birds from Alpha Troop flew in support of the contact, saturating surrounding terrain with minigun and rocket fire.

At one point, a supply of smoke grenades dropped by helicopters, intended for the Cavalrymen, fell into enemy hands. When the NVA popped it, the ground forces directed Cobra fire into the pilferers.

The Cavalrymen made it to the pickup zone and the Blues were extracted, having suffered no casualties. Delta Company stayed the night, detecting heavy enemy movement around the position but engaging them only once, that with a blast from a Claymore mine that killed on NVA. In addition to him, the earlier contacts had resulted in 23 enemy killed by the Blues, nine by helicopters, and four by ARA.

The same day, and somewhat to the north of that contact, another 39 enemy were found dead by Delta Company, 2nd

Bn, 8th Cav. The dead NVA had been killed by Delta Company the day before, March 18, and carried from the battle site by the remnants of the enemy force. The contact had lasted only fifteen minutes, during which the enemy employed small arms and B-40 rockets. They were driven off by Delta

Company backed by artillery, ARA, and a light fire team.

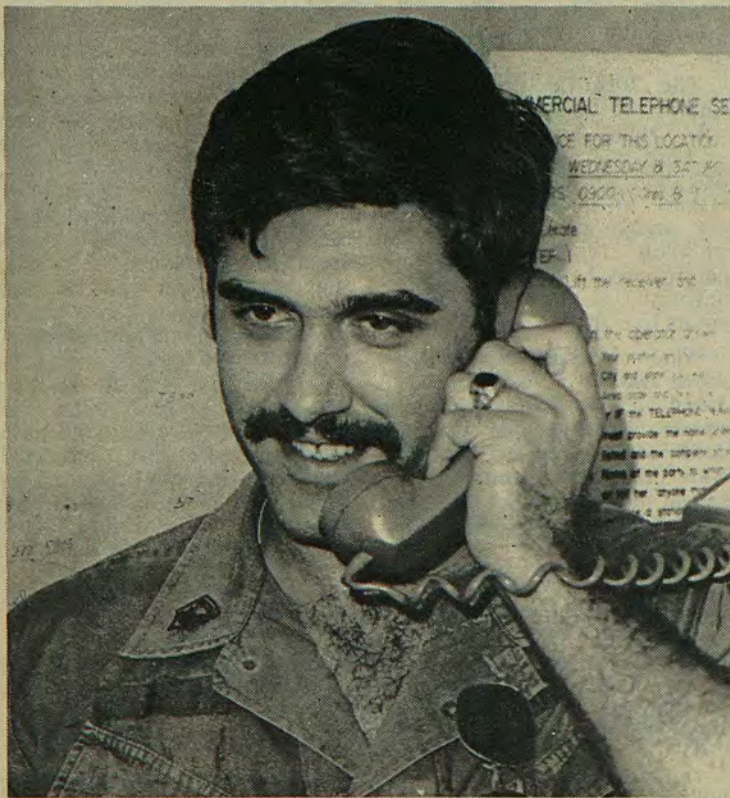
On March 16 the Fourth Company of the 8th ARVN Airborne Bn made contact northwest of FSB Nguyen Trai six miles south of Bu Gia Map in northern Phuoc Long Province. In support of that contact ARA Cobras from B Battery, 2nd Bn,

20th Arty killed three NVA immediately outside the friendly perimeter. They then caught 20 NVA in a clearing to the northwest and killed them all.

Numerous helicopter and ground contacts resulted in a total of 268 enemy soldiers killed by the division during the week March 15-21.



Keeping the lines of communication open and dry, RTO Spec 4 Carl Battaglia negotiates a stream during 1st Cav operations 100 miles north of Saigon. Battaglia is a member of Charlie Company, 2nd Bn, 8th Cav. (USA Photo By SP4 James McCabe)



Spec 5 Dale Walker, NCOIC at 15th Administration Company's Personnel Actions Branch, 1st Air Cav Div, is all smiles as he calls home Easter Sunday from USO Club in Saigon. Walker was selected by his home town representative of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars as one of ten soldiers in Vietnam who would place calls home at the expense of the veteran's organization. (USA Photo By SP4 Bill Ahrbeck)

Village Welcomes Skytroopers Local Forces Trained By Cav

By PFC David Charlton

FSB WADE, Vietnam - "We went there to demonstrate the 81mm mortar and I feel, we left with a few friends we didn't have before," said Sergeant Gerald McDaniel, of the 1st Air Cav's Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry.

The demonstration was part of a program of self defense planned by the Vietnamese Regional Forces and Popular Forces, MACV and the 1st Air Cav Division. Several mortar crews and a fire direction center were rotated at three day intervals to villages recently and heavily hit by the NVA, according to Major Thomas Pearson, battalion executive officer.

The team, with a single tube and 100 high-explosive rounds and 50 illumination charges, demonstrated how to set up, aim, fire and disassemble the equipment.

"Everyone, but everyone, came to the demonstration,

whether we held it at high noon or midnight, as we did one time. We'd have to fire only a few rounds before the men, women and children came out of their huts and watched," McDaniel said.

Sergeant Jerry Mickelsen agreed.

"Self defense here is a family project," Sergeant Mickelsen said. "Even the women and children know how to fire the equipment. If they didn't understand something during the demonstration, they didn't hesitate to ask. Even the children. They wanted to know just what to do and how to do it."

Additionally, the teams acted as a support force for the Regional Forces and Popular Forces.

"When we first went there the people moved out of their best and safest bunkers and insisted that we use them," said Private First Class Charles Stockhouse. "They'd rather have us back

where we were safe. They really believed in protecting us.

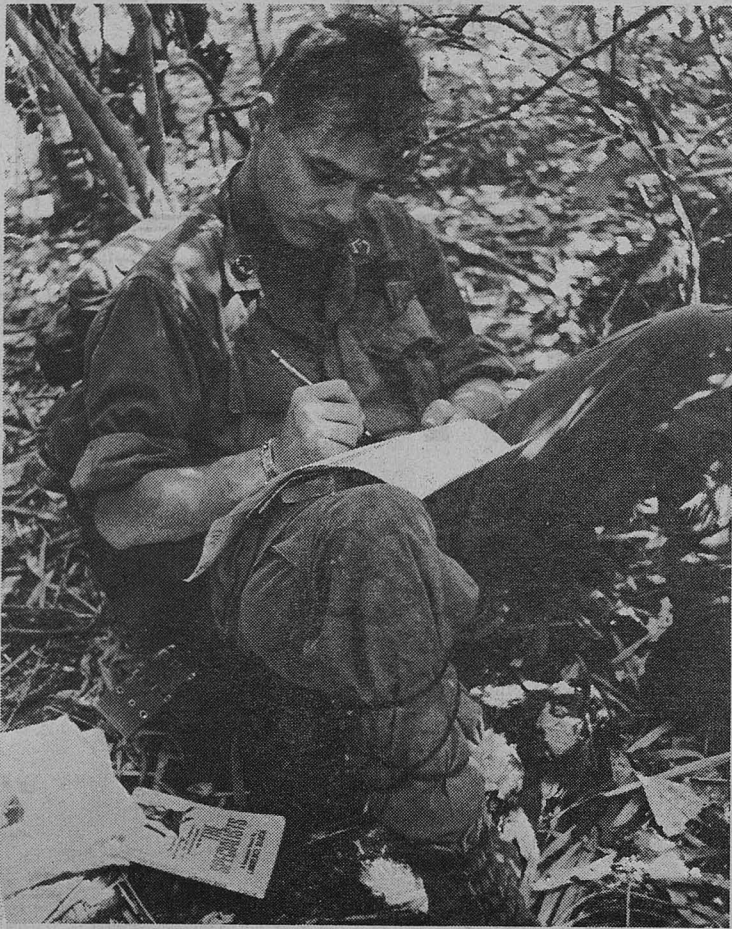
"They held a party for us the first night we were there," he said. "The RF and PF commander spoke very good English and with interpreters, everything went smoothly."

"They asked us how we lived back in the States, what was going on in different parts of the country, and they knew what they were talking about. One long haired Skytrooper was asked whether he was a hippie," Stockhouse continued.

"The one thing that stood out," Mickelsen injected, "more than anything else was their sense of community, a cohesiveness, a feeling of belonging. They cared and their enthusiastic teamwork showed it. They did most of the work, and did it eagerly."

Company E Commander, Captain Richard Hayse, termed the project a complete success, "because the men really enjoyed their work and helping the people."

Letter Home . . .



There's always time for a letter home. 1st Air Cavalryman SFC Norman Demeule fires off a quick note as Delta Company 2nd Bn, 12 Cav takes a break during an operation north of Song Be. (USA Photo by Sp4 Jim McCabe)

Plan Ahead For Deros

By SP4 William Block

To all Skytroopers, getting short is one of the greatest experiences in the world. And the Deros center in Bien Hoa is like the gates to heaven. But there are a few things that have to be done before you can jump on that freedom bird, and a careful Skytrooper will make sure that his path through the Deros center is a smooth one. Under normal conditions,

every man should report to the Administrative Processing Center (the "White House") in Bien Hoa four days prior to the Deros date on his orders. With him he should have his special orders (DEROS), health records, shot record, clothing record, and an installation clearance record (DA Form 137) signed by the unit commander and including a conduct and efficiency rating. Weapons and other organizational gear should be

turned into his unit. Once he has signed in at the White House, he reports to the Deros and R&R Center (Bldg. 3634), operated by the 1st Personnel Services Company, Bien Hoa Army Base, for quarters, rations and transportation. Personnel stationed in Bien Hoa may continue to live with their units, but others are expected to make use of the facilities at the center. Aside from billets, the center offers its own mess hall, NCO and EM clubs, a swimming pool, a laundry, a barber shop, gift shop, nightly movies and floor shows three times a week.

... For God And Country

By Chaplain James W. Daniels
Assistant Division Arty

In Mark 2:21, Jesus tells of patching an old garment with unshrunk cloth. What happens? The patch pulls away and leaves the hole worse than before. How many times to we attempt to identify the christian church? We have even devised a sure way; he's a Lutheran, or Baptist, or Methodist, or whatever! What, in essence, we are doing is trying to put a 20th Century Church as a patch on the garment of a 17th

or 18th Century Church. The church is identified in the community not by Christ's absolute rule, but by the daily ministry and decisions of men. Or, another way of putting it, we seek actively to form the church according to our best understanding of its nature. Then when we say the Church is Christ centered, we do not mean that in reality and practice the church can release itself from its humanity and historicity and live solely be the divine activity of Christ its Lord. The Christian Church is a particular community of people, not an ideology with natural points of contact among men in general. The church is often represented as the proper place for Christian life and action, its program the manifestation of God's kingdom, and we are urged to participate by bringing more and more people into its membership.

"We try to make their stay as comfortable as possible," commented Deros Center First Sergeant Gilbert Broner Jr., "and we appreciate cooperation during their outprocessing."

While in the Deros Center, the Skytrooper attends one initial briefing 1 p.m., a shipping formation at 7 a.m. every morning, and a final briefing at 1:30 p.m. to receive his ticket. Before tickets are given out, though, there are several hours of processing through the White House, Consolidated Supply, and the 15th Med to endure. Other requirements for a ticket are a complete jungle fatigue uniform, a neat medium haircut and neatly trimmed moustache, and a clean shave. Tickets in hand, the men board busses for the 90th Replacement Bn. There, for a period of one to 12 hours, they convert their currency, are checked for unauthorized items, and are manifested for their flight. From there they board busses once again for Bien Hoa Airbase and their long-awaited flight to Travis Air Force Base, California, and home!

Extending Has Its Rewards

Skytroopers scratch off a day on their shorttimer's chart; they cross off a week on a calendar; they line through the months on their helmet covers. And in times of desperation they've been known to count the seconds as their wristwatch ticks.

Everyone thinks of the day his turn will come to board a freedom bird and head back to the States. Yet there are several advantages to adding to the number of days you have to go in Vietnam.

Money, a 30 day special leave anywhere in the Free World, a second R&R, choice of assignment and up to 150 days early separation from active duty are the main glamore points of extending your tour in Vietnam.

Soldiers in Vietnam receive both overseas pay and hostile fire pay. All earnings are tax-free, also adding to the amount of take-home pay.

If you extend for between three and six months, you are eligible for an additional R&R leave. Extend for six months or

more and you are eligible for a special 30 day leave anywhere in the free world. This leave time is not charged against your regular accrued leave time so all accrued leave time will still be credited to you when you are ready to take it later. Uncle Sam will provide free transportation to and from your destination.

An extension can also get a change of duty assignment. You can request a specific duty assignment with the unit of your choice by stating that you will extend your tour for a certain period of time if your request for assignment to a particular unit is granted.

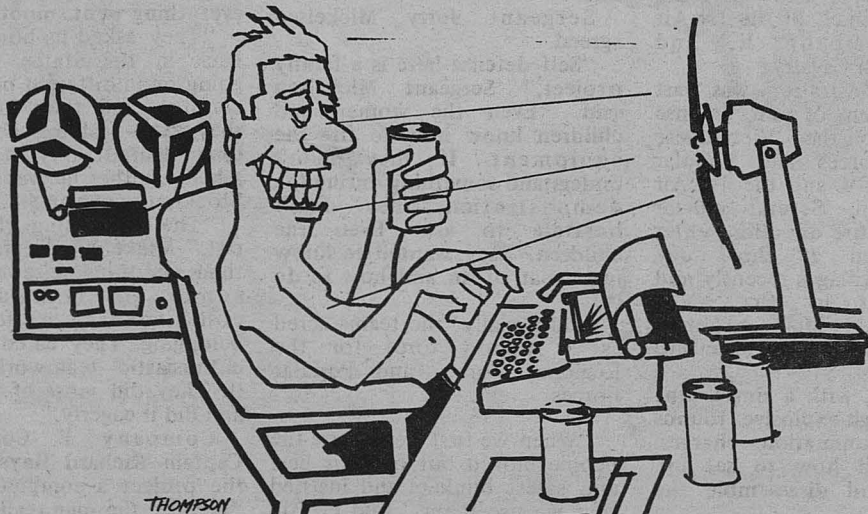
You don't actually commit yourself to an extension until you have been assured that you will be assigned to the unit you choose. The only requirements are that there be a position vacancy for which you are qualified, that the unit will accept you and that your present unit will release you.

Concerning the early out, a tour extension may allow you to qualify for the 150 day early out

program (three months for officers). Under current Army policy, all servicemen returning stateside from short tour areas--such as Vietnam--with less than 150 days (90 days for officers) to ETS will be processed for ETS immediately upon their arrival in CONUS.

If your present Deros would get you home with more than 150 days left to serve, you might be interested in extending your tour so that your new Deros would fall within the limit. This is very easily arranged, because there is no maximum or minimum time for which you may or may extend.

Extending your tour in Vietnam is relatively simple, you make your request on a personnel action request form. You decide how long you'd like to extend, whether you want to keep your present duty assignment or whether you'd like a new job. You decide when and where you want to take your leave. For further information, contact your unit personnel officer or your 1st Sergeant.



Tired of the same 'ole' grind? An extension can get you a change of duty assignment with the unit of your choice. If you request for a specific duty assignment is granted, by extending for a certain period of time you will be assigned that unit. (Art by SP4 Glenn Thompson)

Patients Get Fruit

QUAN LOI - A speedy recovery from illness or injury is due in large part to a proper diet. For the patients at An Loc Province Hospital, the addition of fresh fruit, supplied by the 3rd Brigade Civic Action Office, is more than a welcome sight.

Peter J. Pizor and Dwight F. Herold, both Specialist Fours from the Brigade's S-5 office, make a trip to the hospital nearly every week with a trailer piled high with apples, oranges, grapefruit and lemons.

The regular trip to An Loc Hospital meets with an enthusiastic response from both patients and staff, indicated Herold. "It's really amazing how much a few apples and oranges can mean. We've made a lot of good friends there," he said.



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On Patrol ..



It's no Boy Scout hike through the jungles of the 1st Air Cav country. These Skytroopers from Charlie Company 5th Bn, 7th Cav were on perimeter defense near the Cav's Phuoc Vinh division headquarters. (USA Photo)

Lone Medic Humps

PHUOC VINH -- "There were no friendlies around, only Charlie. I knew they were out there, all I could do was pray," said Private First Class Glenn M. Shumway, medic with the 1st Air Cavalry's 15th Medical Battalion at Phuoc Vinh.

Flying out of Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons, the Medevac crew received word that a Huey "Slick" was reported downed north of FSB Kingston. A downed bird gets first priority and immediately they went in search of it.

"About 15 minutes later we spotted the bird. We went down to look for survivors when we started taking enemy fire. We pulled back and waited for a couple of Cobras to clear the

way," the private said.

After the Cobras gave them the go-ahead the Medevac bird went down again and the pilot, Captain Harry Wisdom, hovered about 20 feet off the ground while PFC Shumway was let down in a hoist to look for survivors.

"I was really scared. I dropped off and got about 10 feet from the hoist when the gunfire opened up again. Our gunner, Sergeant Timmy Kerwin, returned fire with his M-60, but I thought the bird was going to get shot down so I signalled them to move out."

PFC Shumway was now alone and unarmed, with nothing but a hand radio.

Warrant Officer Richard J. Tanner, aircraft commander said, "We waited as long as we could, then the warning lights started turning red. We headed for the nearest firebase to check for oil and fuel leaks before turning back to get him."

They had received one round but the chopper was still fully operational.

PFC Shumway tried to use the hand radio but he couldn't contact anyone. He was able to hear transmissions, however, and they sounded good. "We're going in there to get our man."

"They didn't even know if I was alive. A Cobra prepped the area first and then the gunner spotted me and they let down the hoist. I ran to it and we immediately took off."

It had been only 15 minutes since he had left the bird but it was by far the longest 15 minutes he had ever spent anywhere.

"It's hard to believe the feeling of helplessness you get. I prayed and my prayers were answered."

And what were his thoughts when he saw that bird come back for him? "Wonderful, a great feeling, like coming back from the dead."

Bunker Probe Real Lesson

PHUOC VINH -- A lesson in probing bunkers for hidden weapons had as good results for the teacher as for the student.

1st Air Cavalrymen from Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry found a complex of 15 bunkers about five miles northwest of Phuoc Vinh while on patrol.

"I decided this would give me a good chance to show my new squad leader (Staff Sergeant Jonnie Zimmerman,) how to probe bunkers for hidden weapons and ammo," said Sergeant Anthony Castro, the company's pointman.

"I was telling him, 'you poke a knife in along the floor of the bunker like this' when I heard a clink of metal and hit something solid with the knife," Sgt. Castro said.

A little digging with the knife uncovered an SKS rifle. Further exploration of the bunkers revealed five more SKSs, two M-1 rifles, one shotgun and a sniper rifle.

Further Your Schooling

Education Center Can Help

By PFC David Charlton

QUAN LOI -- Perhaps you want a high school diploma or maybe a college degree. Further schooling in your MOS may interest you. Do you want to speak French, Thai, or Burmese, among other languages?

Spec. 4 Larry Nelson and Spec. 4 John Cullinar of the education center can help you. Set up for business in a large white trailer next to the post exchange, they can help with

almost any educational problem you might have.

For those who didn't finish high school, the center can provide the GED test. Passage of the test is equivalent to a diploma, according to Nelson.

Also available are college level examinations for credit, United States Armed Forces Institute courses, college correspondence courses, a degree completion program mainly designed for officers, a correspondence course for in-service subjects and

a program with the University of Maryland.

Information on the 90 day drop for entering school, government educational benefit and college requirements are available also. The center has an extensive file of college and university catalogues and application forms for those soon to return to the world.

"Most of our business comes from people who joined the army without finishing high school and found that a high school education is becoming a necessity in the 1st Cav," said Nelson.

"Our first step is to administer a pre-test to find out if the person can pass the GED. If he can, we'll go ahead and give it to him. If not, we have stacks of books ranging from Goals of American Democracy to Modern Geography which we can use in conjunction with high school level courses offered by USAFI.

"USAFI," Nelson said, "provides courses by correspondence at college level, high school and technical school level. Up to 30 college credits can be earned through the college level examination."

"The college courses offered are the basics of a college education," Nelson said. "English, speech, mathematics from basic statistics to differential equations, economics, American and European history, Far eastern history, psychology, sociology, astronomy, biology, oceanography and business administration courses."

Courses in written and spoken languages are also available from USAFI. Reading courses in French, Latin, German, Russian, Spanish and Italian are available, Nelson pointed out. Courses in spoken languages range from Spanish to Serbo-Croatian.

In the technical field courses covering practical application aeronautical engineering, carpentry, plumbing, electricity, diesel engines, radio, television and law enforcement.

All it costs is \$5. The textbooks for all the courses are free and are provided by the education center.

The degree completion program has been created for officers who want to correlate their Cav experience for college credit.

Medevac Flies Despite Heavy Ground Fire

FSB BUTTONS, Vietnam--Medevac.

It was created in Vietnam. The word evokes images of peril, bravery and determination. It can also mean frustration and helplessness.

When a 1st Air Cav reconnaissance platoon from Echo Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, met with heavy contact, Medevac meant action. There were four urgent litters, critical cases and three priorities, cases which could turn urgent if they were not treated within four hours.

"When we get an urgent we bounce," said Captain Harry Wisdom, the pilot of the Medevac crew which took on the Echo recon mission. "Our main concern is getting the people out. When we knew somebody is urgent down there we knock ourselves out."

On a hot PZ the NVA are also trying to knock out the evacuation chopper. Before this mission was completed, the bird took heavy fire three times.

"We realize how hard it is to travel with badly wounded men," said Capt. Wisdom. "But if our bird is shot down over these people, no one is helped."

On the first attempt the bird had just begun its hover 50 feet over the contact area when it received small arms and .30 caliber fire.

Without realizing they had taken hits in the tail boom and rotor blades, the bird completed a second emergency mission. Again, at dusk, they flew to Echo recon, which had been

reinforced on the ground by a platoon of A Company.

And again, they took rounds from heavy ground to air fire. As on the first sortie, they could only fire into the trees as they left the hostile area.

The all too familiar scene was repeated the next morning when the Medevac made its third pass into the area. It was forced to leave after being hit.

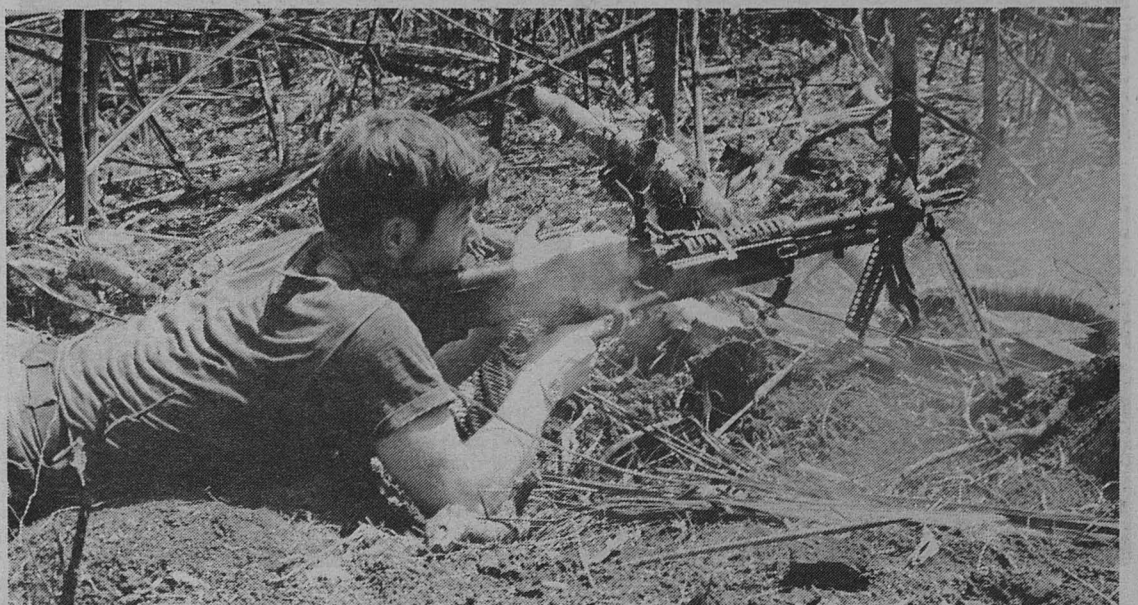
If the scene above the trees was frustration, the word for the situation on the ground was helplessness. Pinned down, the Skytroopers could only watch as the mercy chopper was driven off time and again. "When they opened up on the bird, they opened up on us," said PFC Mike Kindel.

"On the third try, they didn't pull out right away. They stayed on even when they were taking rounds. They did everything they could," he continued. "Then Max rolled in hot. There was some shrap over our heads, but that Cobra is a beautiful bird to see."

After the ARA ship had finished its work the area was silent. Without wasting time, the two battered platoons moved out to a sit-down LZ. Carrying the injured Cavalrymen as well as their packs and equipment, to took six hours to travel 1,500 meters. A day after the initial contact the Medevac took on eight wounded.

Medevac. That's where the "romance" of war and the grim reality of contact meet face to face.

Machinegun Prep ...



Spec. 4 William Willever puts down a solid base of fire in a suspected enemy location. The 1st Air Cavalryman is a machinegunner with Delta Company 2nd Bn, 12th Cav. (USA Photo by SP4 Jim McCabe)



That C-130 may not be the "Freedom Bird" but it's the next best thing. 1st Air Cavalrymen from Delta and Echo Companies 2nd Bn, 8th Cav disembark at Bien Hoa airport for a three-day stand down at the Cav's VIP Center.

Cav VIPs Enjoy Life

By SP4 Dennis Thornton
BIEN HOA, Vietnam — They're Very Important People to the 1st Air Cavalry Division — they're the "Grunts" who rarely get to do anything but walk and shoot.

Now they get an occasional chance to relax and enjoy life in the newly opened VIP Center in Bien Hoa, removed from the dense bamboo jungles and whizzing AK bullets.

"It's almost like being in 'the world' for three days," smiled Specialist Four Mickey Dion of the 1st Air Cav's Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry.

Recreation facilities ranging from miniature golf to basketball, football, soccer, softball and archery are available for the athletically-minded. Indoor athletes can compete at the pool table or across the pingpong net. Or the Skytroopers can check out a swim suit and splash around the pool.

Specialist Four Jack Albrycht also from Company C, called the VIP Center "Great, really great. I've just been catching up on my letter writing."

Packages of goods bought at the PX or gift shop in Bien Hoa can be mailed at the APO station at the center.

During the stay at the VIP Center, the men are given a chance to make sure their financial and

administrative records are up-to-date. They receive a partial pay, if needed. While the men relax, a team from 27th Maintenance checks and repairs their weapons and radios.

A double feature movie highlights the evening activities both nights and a traveling floor show frequently drops in to entertain. A club is also open at night.

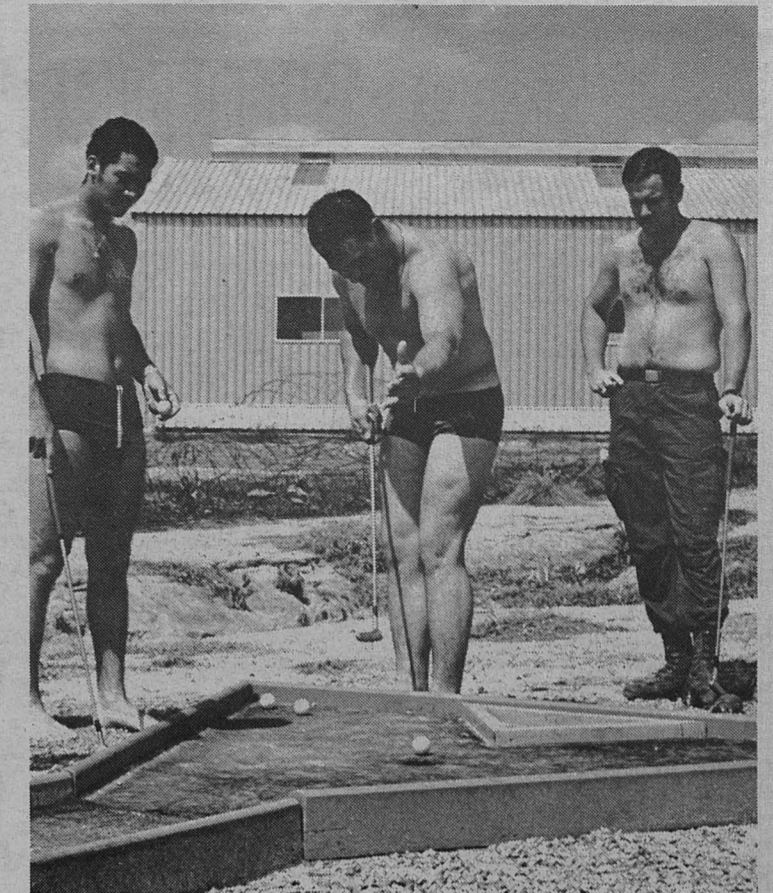
Some of the soldiers prefer a total rest, staging a two-day sleep-in on the first real bed, mattress and clean, white sheets they've seen since arriving in country.

"I can speak for myself and the rest of the guys. We were glad to get out of the field for a couple of days and really needed a rest," said Specialist Four John Sparks a company medic. "I just hate to leave tomorrow."

The 1st Air Cavalrymen are treated to a dinner at Loon Foon's Chinese Restaurant in nearby Long Binh the second night at the VIP Center.

Relaxed and contented, Company C prepares to go back to the "boonies" the third morning, reluctant to leave the relative paradise but renewed physically and mentally for a few more months of the field.

"It really gave me a lift," said Specialist Four David Martin "Those two days flew by but we really had a lot of fun."



Members of Alpha Company 1st Bn, 12th Cav try their hand at a round of miniature golf at the 1st Air Cav's VIP Center in Bien Hoa. Line companies are rotated out of the field periodically for three days of rest and relaxation.

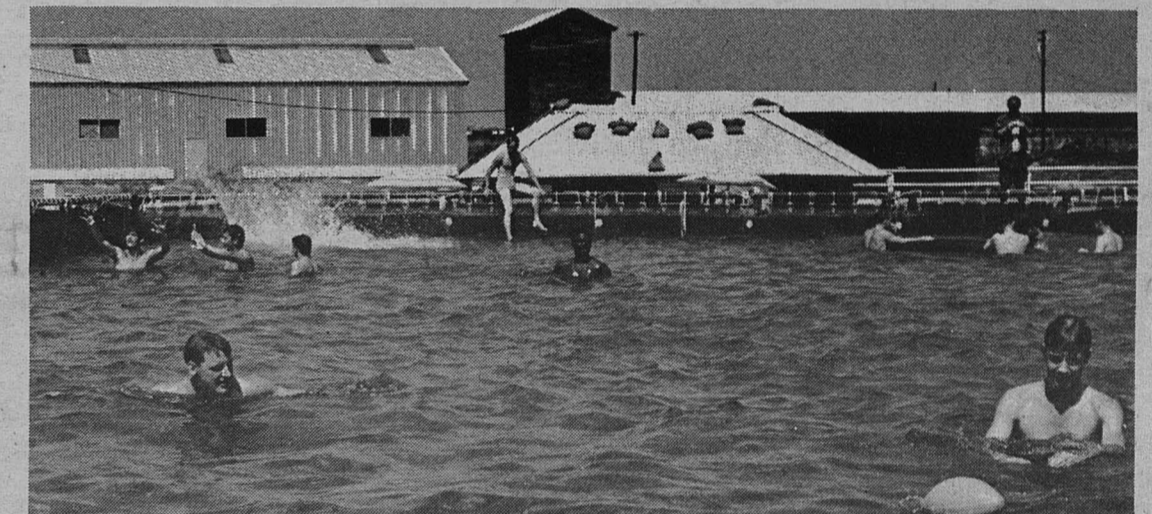
USA Photos by SP4 Len Fallscheer



A rock combo with girl singer is usually the highlight of the three-day R&R for field troops at the 1st Cav's VIP Center. Movies and floorshows are regular features for the men who have seen nothing but bamboo and spartan firebases for months.



With the music blaring and the beverages flowing, it doesn't take long for Skytroopers to forget the field and groove on the present at the 1st Cav VIP Center. The desired psychological release is complete.



Plenty of room for everyone in the 1st Cav's VIP Center pool and the water's always warm. Members of Alpha Company, 1st Bn, 12th Cav and Delta Company, 2nd Bn, 8th Cav get in the swim of things during the three day stand down.

Bien Hoa VIP Center Great Morale Builder

By SP4 Jay Grossman

FSB BUTTONS, Vietnam — "Who wants some Screaming Yellow Zonkers?"

Half a dozen 1st Air Cavalrymen dropped their C rations and canteens and gathered around the man with the popcorn candy.

The others continued selecting their meals, throwing away the ham and eggs, sifting through CARE packages from their homes in the world. They were just about finished packing up.

Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry was about to make a combat assault, leaving this "forward" rear of the 2nd Brigade. Yet there was no tension at all. These Cavalrymen were relaxed and singing and there was much good-natured bantering.

They had good reason. Not an hour before they had returned from the VIP center in Bien Hoa, and all the soft-spoken, half-hidden anxiety of the grunt's world had been left behind.

They spoke wistfully of the past three days, as though the rear facilities were a millionaires'

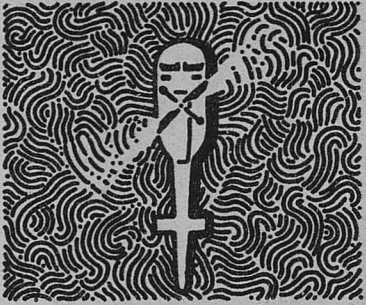
resort. Words like sheets, show, movie, miniature golf, "Abbey Road" and steam bath were spoken with a bit of awe and a touch of fresh nostalgia.

PFC Tony Katz recalled the "Freedom Bird" that had confronted them when they first arrived at Bien Hoa. "I saw my replacement getting off, and I just wanted to get on," he said. He also spoke fondly of the 22 pizzas he had devoured during the three day R&R.

Specialist Four Steve Conley remembered skinny dipping at one in the morning. "The MPs didn't kick us out," he said. "They just sort of asked us to leave."

"It was the best R&R we've ever had," declared Captain Robert Gallegher the commanding officer of Alpha company. "It lets the grunts relax for a while with no tension, no listening to the horn all through the night, no need to worry about everything that moves."

"We'll take it easy for a day or so," he continued, "until they can sweat off the beer and soda."



ROTOR WASH

Lovely Edy . . .



DISCOM Switches Board

BIEN HOA – The 1st Cav Bien Hoa rear area, which formerly made use of an Air Force switchboard, now has its own signal center – the Division Support Command switchboard.

The new switchboard will make it easier to contact Division rear elements, and connections should be clearer. The improving factor is tropospheric scatter, which involves bouncing signals off the ionosphere instead of the more conventional line of sight signal transfer.

Operated by the 13th Signal Bn, the switchboard means more efficient communications between rear elements and thus better logistical support for Skytroopers in the field.

New Command for Maint Bn

BIEN HOA – Major Neil S. Williamson III took command of the 27th Maintenance Bn. here recently, accepting the battalion's colors from Maj. Gen. E. B. Roberts, Commanding General of the 1st Air Cav Div.

At the ceremonies, Lt. Col. Robert C. Hawk, the outgoing commander, was awarded the Legion of Merit (1st oak leaf cluster) and the Air Medal (2nd through 5th oak leaf clusters). Hawk, who has commanded the battalion since April 1969, will return to CONUS and the Army Material Command in Washington D. C.

Assuming command of the battalion, Williamson, who has been the unit's executive officer since July 1969, said, "I'm not a newcomer here. You know me and I know you. We all know the job we have to do and we'll continue to do it anywhere, anytime."

The 35-year-old major, 1958 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, joined the division after completing Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. This is his second Vietnam tour.

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Patients Get Picture From Medic-Artist

By PFC Dave Charlton

QUAN LOI – If his patients don't quite get the picture, 1st Air Cav medic John Bauer can draw them one.

In addition to his first aid duties, the specialist is employed in his secondary MOS as a medical illustrator.

"I started drawing a few months before I came into the Army and when I got in I found they needed illustrators, so I applied. They needed medics more, but since there was still a call for illustrators in the medical field I still got it as a secondary."

After completing basic medical training at Ft. Sam Houston, Tex., Bauer worked at the medical center's training aids department producing charts and slides now familiar to the basic trainee on medical aid.

Proof of his poster skill greets

the grunt at the front desk of the 2nd Bn, 5th Cav dispensary. "Don't be shy, C'mon in and see your sympathetic medic," and a benignly smiling figure motions the potential patient forward.

"You might say it's my partial contribution to preventive medicine," the blond, husky midwesterner said.

Another sign accompanied by a picture of a realistic but Frankenstein-esque woman warns Skytroopers about the friends they choose.

Or sometimes he produces a more subtle approach; a parrot-sized mosquito hovers in front of the words, "You, the pill, the silent enemy, malaria."

"I think they do a little good, if only as a reminder of the situation at hand," he said. "They read it, think about it, and maybe we've saved someone a little trouble and a few problems."

Miss Edy Williams, budding starlet with 20th Century-Fox, wants to remind all Skytroopers about the soon-to-be-published edition of the history of her favorite men, the men of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. Unfortunately, Edy's not in the book, but pictures of each Cav unit are represented along with summaries of the part they played in the Vietnam Conflict.

(Photo courtesy of 20th Century-Fox Studios)



That's quite a stock pile you have there Sarge. Master Sgt. Richard Land, 99th Ordnance Detachment, straightens part of an NVA arms cache discovered north of Song Be by Company B, 1st Bn, 8th Cav. In two days Company B found more than 43,000 rounds of small arms ammo, 500 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 220 rifle propelled grenades, 170 anti-armor grenades, 2400 pounds of TNT, 20 cases of plastic explosives and 5,000 feet of time fuse.

Cav Captures Charlie's Cache



Spec. 4 Ruben Valencia, left, and Spec. 4 Mike Lurick inspect new Communist SKS rifles found in the massive weapons cache 100 miles north of Saigon. The 1st Air Cavalrymen are members of Bravo Company, 1st Bn, 8th Cav.

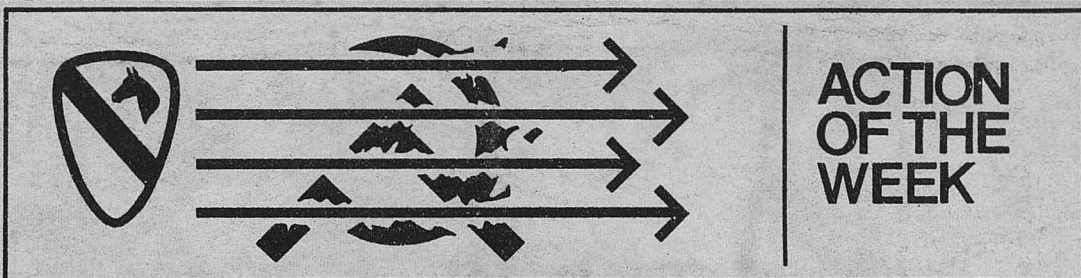
USA Photo By SP4 James McCabe



Staff Sgt. Alongo Wilson and Master Sgt. Richard Land, 99th Ordnance Detachment, stack 82mm mortar rounds, B-40 rockets and fuses in preparation for demolition. 1st Air Cavalrymen from Bravo Company, 1st Bn, 8th Cav, found the cache, while on an operation in Phuoc Long Province.



Signaling the bird home, this 1st Air Cavalryman guides a logistics helicopter to a freshly cut landing zone 100 miles north of Saigon. Hot chow in the field is the mark of the Airmobile Division. (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)



March 8-14

QUAN LOI -- Charging through a rubber grove after fleeing NVA soldiers, tanks and Armored Personnel Carriers from Lima Troop, 3rd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment discovered an estimated battalion-sized bunker complex.

The result of a hard day of fighting March 10 was 52 NVA killed, five more detained and several small arms and mortar rounds were captured.

The troops, running ACAVs and Sheridan tanks were moving through a rubber grove to set up an early morning ambush four miles southwest of Loc Ninh. A small enemy unit was caught in the trap, killing one NVA. Blood trails led through the rubber and into the jungle beyond and the

big machines followed the wounded enemy.

The fleeing NVA chose the wrong direction to go, because they led the track commanders to the larger, unprepared NVA unit, which was then crushed and sent packing.

At 10:30 a.m., the tracks halted momentarily. Confronting them in the broken jungle were 12 enemy bunkers and three trench lines, full of surprised enemy soldiers.

Heavy weapons blazing and backed up by artillery, air strikes and a light fire team, the armored unit launched its attack against the enemy fortifications. It was greeted by a heavy volume of B-40 rockets and hursts of AK-47 and machine gun fire.

A 1st Cav Cobra from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, flown by Warrant

Officer One Larry Grover arrived to provide additional punch to the armored assault. "When we came over the contact area the tankers were cutting down the enemy right and left," he said. "We spotted six NVA trying to get out of the area. That's when we caught them with our rockets and miniguns."

The last of the enemy defenders were killed or driven out of the position by noon. In addition to the six killed by the Cobra, 46 enemy soldiers were found killed by the track crews. Scattered in the torn and smoking wreckage of the enemy position were 19 rifles, four machineguns, five B-40 rocket launchers, a .60mm mortar and 44 .60mm mortar rounds.

An additional sweep the following day found four NVA killed by the tracks, five RPGs and ten AK-47s.

Rice Feeds Refugee Families

TAY NINH -- More than 100 tons of Communist rice intended for NVA forces will soon be feeding hungry South Vietnamese families throughout the 1st Air Cavalry's area of operations, according to a division civil affairs officer.

Believed to be the second largest rice cache of the war, it

was found by Scouts of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, deep in virgin enemy territory near the Cambodian border.

Captain David Wilson, 1st Brigade civil affairs officer said the rice given to Tay Ninh Province will go to the widows and orphans of 1st ARVN Airborne Division troopers and the province's many refugees.

"The province Refugee and Social Welfare Service keeps a list of the refugees which normally receive assistance," he explained. "By giving them this rice the Service will be able to divert poverty funds to public works projects in the refugee hamlets."

Similar plans are underway in the other provinces within the Cav's area. Captain Wilson emphasized the effect the free rice distribution will have in enhancing the local government's image.

"This is a Vietnamese project all the way now," he said. "The rice is in the hands of the province officials and should give them a chance to work out some of the logistical problems involved in distributing something as big as this. I'm impressed with the plans they have drawn up."

The 126.5 tons of rice, some still in Chinese-marked bags, was found piled in several huts waiting to resupply an apparently sizable NVA/VC force. Company C, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, spent almost five days loading the rice into Hueys and Chinooks back-logging it to a forward firebase. A defensive perimeter and artillery fire guarded the cache at night until the work could be completed.

From the firebase, the rice was loaded on Air Force C-130s and flown to distribution points in the three provinces.

Skytroopers Interrupt NVA Training Schedule

By PFC Terry Turner

TAY NINH -- Basic training at Ft. Ho Chi Minh was cancelled because of the 1st Air Cavalry.

Apache scout birds from Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry spotted what appeared to be an extensive bunker complex a short distance from the Cambodian border and the Blue platoon was inserted to check the area out.

Greeting the quick reaction force when they walked into the bunker complex were toy tanks made of bamboo with logs serving as the gun barrels. Other toy weapons modelled after American arms were scattered around the area.

"It looked like a training area to us," said Lieutenant Jack Hugel, the Blues platoon leader, "because it had all kinds of toy weapons and many signs, one saying 'Remember Ho Chi Minh.' There were a lot of political indoctrination devices in the area. Another sign I remember told the people to study during the 19th, 20th and 22nd of December because it

was a holiday."

An interpreter translated the signs while the rest of the platoon continued to search the area.

"As we moved down the trails, we found a hootch that had training aids. There were tanks made out of bamboo, 10 to 15 RPGs, hundreds of blocks of wood shaped like Chicom grenades, and structures that looked like our bunker lines with portholes in them along the trail," Hugel said.

"They had built quite elaborate living quarters," he added. "We also found a classroom with tables and benches."

Also found in the area were three tons of rice and one ton of corn, a bamboo mock-up of a Huey hanging from a tree and a mock-up of a fixed wing A13, a plane used by the ARVN Air Force.

"We couldn't resist putting Cav patches over their signs," Hugel laughed. The Blues blew the bunkers and left the area.

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